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# Glossary

Words set in **boldface** within definitions are also defined in the glossary.

## A

**AC** See **assistant cameraperson**.

**ADR** See **automatic dialogue replacement**.

**aerial-view shot** Also known as *bird's-eye-view shot*. An **omniscient-point-of-view shot** that is taken from an aircraft or extremely high crane and implies that the observer can see all.

**alienation effect** Also known as *distancing effect*. A psychological distance between audience and stage for which, according to German playwright Bertolt Brecht, every aspect of a theatrical production should strive by limiting the audience's identification with **characters** and events.

**ambient sound** Sound that emanates from the ambience (background) of the **setting** or environment being filmed, either recorded during **production** or added during **postproduction**. Although it may incorporate other types of film sound—**dialogue**, **narration**, **sound effects**, **Foley sounds**, and music—ambient sound does not include any unintentionally recorded noise made during production.

**amplitude** The degree of motion of air (or other medium) within a sound wave. The greater the amplitude of the sound wave, the harder it strikes the eardrum, and thus the louder the sound. Compare **loudness**.

**analog** Film is an analog medium in which the camera creates an image by recording through a camera **lens** the original light given off by the subject and stores this image on a roll of **negative film stock**. Opposite of **digital**.

**animated film** Also known as *cartoon*. Drawings or other graphical images placed in a **series photography**—like sequence to portray movement. Before computer graphics technology, the basic type of animated film was created through drawing.

**antagonist** The **major character** whose values or behavior are in conflict with those of the **protagonist**.

**antirealism** A **treatment** that is against or the opposite of **realism**. However, realism and antirealism (like realism and fantasy) are not strict polarities.

**aperture** Also known as *gate*. The camera opening that defines the area of each **frame** of film exposed.

**apparent motion** The movie projector's tricking us into perceiving separate images as one continuous image rather than a series of jerky movements. Apparent motion is the result of such factors as the **phi phenomenon** and **critical flicker fusion**.

**art director** The person responsible for transforming the **production designer's** vision into a reality on the screen, assessing the staging requirements for a production, and arranging for and supervising the work of the members of the art department.

**aspect ratio** The relationship between the **frame's** two dimensions: the width of the image related to its height.

**assistant cameraperson (AC)** Member of the **camera crew** who assists the **camera operator**. The *first AC* oversees everything having to do with the camera, **lenses**, supporting equipment, and the material on which the movie is being shot. The *second AC* prepares the **slate** that is used to identify each **scene** as it is being filmed, files camera reports, and feeds **film stock** into magazines to be loaded into the camera.

**associate (or assistant) producer** Person charged with carrying out specific responsibilities assigned by the **producer**, **executive producer**, or **line producer**.

**asynchronous sound** Sound that comes from a source apparent in the image but is not precisely matched temporally with the actions occurring in that image.

**auteurism** A **film theory** based on the idea that the **director** is the sole "author" of a movie. The application of auteurism frequently takes two forms: a judgment of the whole body of a film director's work (not individual films) based on style, and a classification of great directors based on a hierarchy of directorial styles.

**automatic dialogue replacement (ADR)**  
**Rerecording** done via computer—a faster, less expensive, and more technically sophisticated process than rerecording that is done with actors.

**avant-garde film** See **experimental film**.

**axis of action** See **180-degree system**.

## B

**backlight** Lighting, usually positioned behind and in line with the subject and the camera, used to create highlights on the subject as a means of separating it from the background and increasing its appearance of three-dimensionality.

**backstory** A fictional history behind the situation extant at the start of the **main story**.

**best boy** First assistant electrician to the **gaffer** on a movie **production set**.

**bird's-eye-view shot** See **aerial-view shot**.

**bit player** An actor who holds a small speaking part.

**Black Maria** The first movie studio—a crude, hot, cramped shack in which Thomas Edison and his staff began making movies.

**blimp** A soundproofed enclosure somewhat larger than a camera, in which the camera may be mounted to prevent its sounds from reaching the microphone.

**blocking** Actual physical relationships among **figures** and **settings**.

**boom** A polelike mechanical device for holding the microphone in the air, out of camera range, that can be moved in almost any direction.

## C

**cameo** A small but significant role often played by a famous actor.

**camera crew** Technicians that make up two separate groups—one concerned with the camera, the other concerned with electricity and lighting.

**camera obscura** Literally, "dark chamber." A box (or a room in which a viewer stands); light entering (originally through a tiny hole, later through a **lens**) on one side of the box (or room) projects an image from the outside onto the opposite side or wall.

**camera operator** The member of the **camera crew** who does the actual **shooting**.

**cartoon** See **animated film**.

**casting** The process of choosing and hiring actors for a movie.

- cel** A transparent sheet of celluloid or similar plastic on which drawings or lettering may be made for use in animation or titles.
- celluloid roll film** Also known as *motion picture film* or *raw film stock*. A material for filming that consists of long strips of perforated cellulose acetate on which a rapid succession of **frames** can be recorded. One side of the strip is layered with an emulsion consisting of light-sensitive crystals and dyes; the other side is covered with a backing that reduces reflections. Each side of the strip is perforated with sprocket holes that facilitate the movement of the stock through the sprocket wheels of the camera, the processor, and the projector.
- CGI** Computer-generated imagery. Compare **in-camera effect** and **laboratory effect**.
- character** An essential element of film **narrative**; any of the beings who play functional roles within the **plot**, either acting or being acted on. Characters can be **flat** or **round**; **major**, **minor**, or **marginal**; **protagonists** or **antagonists**.
- characterization** The process of the actor's interpreting a **character** in a movie. Characterization differs according to the actor, the character, the screenplay, and the **director**.
- character role** An actor's part that represents a distinctive **character** type (sometimes a stereotype): society leader, judge, doctor, diplomat, and so on.
- chiaroscuro** The use of deep gradations and subtle variations of lights and darks within an image.
- chronophotographic gun** See **revolver photographique**.
- cinematic conventions** Accepted systems, methods, or customs by which movies communicate. Cinematic conventions are flexible; they are not "rules."
- cinematic language** The accepted systems, methods, or conventions by which the movies communicate with the viewer.
- cinematic time** The imaginary time in which a movie's images appear or its **narrative** occurs; time that has been manipulated through **editing**. Compare **real time**.
- cinematography** The process of capturing moving images on film or some other medium.
- climax** The **narrative's** turning point, marking the transition between **rising action** and **falling action**.
- closed frame** A **frame** of a motion picture image that, theoretically, neither **characters** nor objects enter or leave. Compare **open frame**.
- close-up (CU)** A **shot** that often shows a part of the body filling the **frame**—traditionally a face, but possibly a hand, eye, or mouth.
- color** As related to sound, see **quality**.
- colorization** The use of digital technology, in a process similar to hand-tinting, to "paint" colors on movies meant to be seen in black and white.
- composition** The process of visualizing and putting visualization plans into practice; more precisely, the organization, distribution, balance, and general relationship of stationary objects and **figures**, as well as of light, shade, line, and color, within the **frame**.
- content** The subject of an artwork. Compare **form**.
- content curve** In terms of cinematic **duration**, an arc that measures information in a **shot**; at the curve's peak, the viewer has absorbed the information from a shot and is ready to move on to the next shot.
- continuity editing** A style of **editing** (now dominant throughout the world) that seeks to achieve logic, smoothness, sequential flow, and the temporal and spatial orientation of viewers to what they see on the screen. Continuity editing ensures the flow from **shot** to shot; creates a rhythm based on the relationship between cinematic space and **cinematic time**; creates filmic unity (beginning, middle, and end); and establishes and resolves a problem. In short, continuity editing tells a **story** as clearly and coherently as possible. Compare **discontinuity editing**.
- costumes** The clothing worn by an actor in a movie (sometimes called *wardrobe*, a term that also designates the department in a studio in which clothing is made and stored).
- cover shot** See **master shot**.

**crane shot** A shot that is created by movement of a camera mounted on an elevating arm (crane) that, in turn, is mounted on a vehicle that, if **shooting** requires it, can move on its own power or be pushed along tracks.

**critical flicker fusion** A phenomenon that occurs when a single light flickers on and off with such speed that the individual pulses of light fuse together to give the illusion of continuous light. See also **apparent motion**.

**crosscutting** Editing that cuts between two or more actions occurring at the same time, and usually in the same place. Compare **intercutting** and **parallel editing**.

**CU** See **close-up**.

**cut** A direct change from one shot to another; that is, the precise point at which shot A ends and shot B begins; one result of **cutting**.

**cutting** Also known as *splicing*. The actual joining together of two shots. The editor must first cut (or splice) each shot from its respective roll of film before gluing or taping all the shots together.

**cutting on action** A continuity editing technique that smoothes the transition between shots portraying a single action from different camera angles. The editor ends the first shot in the middle of a continuing action and begins the subsequent shot at approximately the same point in the matching action.

## D

**dailies** Also known as *rushes*. Usually, synchronized picture/sound work prints of a day's shooting that can be studied by the **director**, editor, and other crew members before the next day's shooting begins.

**decor** The color and textures of the interior decoration, furniture, draperies, and curtains of a set.

**deep-focus cinematography** Using the short-focal-length lens to capture **deep-space composition** and its illusion of depth.

**deep-space composition** A total visual composition that occupies all three planes of the frame, thus creating an illusion of depth, and

that is usually reproduced on the screen by **deep-focus cinematography**.

**denouement** The resolution or conclusion of the narrative.

**depth of field** The distance in front of a camera and its lens in which objects are in apparent sharp focus.

**design** The process by which the *look* of the settings, props, lighting, and actors is determined. Set design, **decor**, prop selection, lighting setup, **costuming**, makeup, and hairstyle design all play a role in shaping the overall design.

**dialogue** The lip-synchronous speech of characters who are either visible onscreen or speaking offscreen, say from another part of the room that is not visible or from an adjacent room.

**diegesis** (adj. **diegetic**) The total world of a story—the events, characters, objects, settings, and sounds that form the world in which the story occurs.

**diegetic element** An element—event, character, object, setting, sound—that helps form the world in which the story occurs. Compare **nondiegetic element**.

**diegetic sound** Sound that originates from a source within a film's world. Compare **nondiegetic sound**.

**digital** An electronic process that creates its images through a numbered system of pixels (which we can think of as the binary numbers 0 and 1) that are stored on a **flash card** or a computer hard drive.

**digital animation** Animation that employs computer software to create the images used in the animation process (as opposed to **analog** techniques that rely on stop-motion photography, hand-drawn **cels**, etc.).

**digital format** A means of storing recorded sound, made possible by computer technology, in which each sound wave is represented by combinations of the numbers 0 and 1.

**direct cinema** An approach to documentary filmmaking that employs an unobtrusive style in an attempt to give viewers as truthful and "direct" an experience of events as possible.

**director** The person who (a) determines and realizes on the screen an artistic vision of the

screenplay; (b) **casts** the actors and directs their performances; (c) works closely with the production **design** in creating the look of the film, including the choice of locations; (d) oversees the work of the cinematographer and other key **production** personnel; and, (e) in most cases, supervises all **postproduction** activity, especially the **editing**.

**discontinuity editing** A style of **editing**—less widely used than **continuity editing**, often but not exclusively in **experimental films**—that joins **shots** A and B to produce an effect or meaning not even hinted at by either shot alone.

**dissolve** Also known as *lap dissolve*. A transitional device in which **shot** B, superimposed, gradually appears over shot A and begins to replace it at midpoint in the transition. Dissolves usually indicate the passing of time. Compare **fade-in/fade-out**.

**distancing effect** See **alienation effect**.

**documentary film** A nonfiction film that presents the filmmakers' perspective on actuality. Documentary films take many forms, including **factual, instructional, persuasive, and propaganda**. Regardless of approach, every documentary is shaped by the filmmaker's intent and subjective interpretation of ideas and actual events.

**dolly** A wheeled support for a camera that permits the cinematographer to make noiseless moving **shots**.

**dolly in** Slow movement of the camera toward a subject, making the subject appear larger and more significant. Such gradual intensification is commonly used at moments of a **character's** realization and/or decision, or as a **point-of-view shot** to indicate the reason for the character's realization. See also **zoom-in**. Compare **dolly out**.

**dolly out** Movement of the camera away from the subject that is often used for *slow disclosure*, which occurs when an edited succession of images leads from A to B to C as they gradually reveal the elements of a **scene**. Each image expands on the one before, thereby changing its significance with new information. Compare **dolly in**.

**dolly shot** Also known as *traveling shot*. A **shot** taken by a camera fixed to a wheeled support

called a **dolly**. When the dolly runs on tracks (or when the camera is mounted to a crane or an aerial device such as an airplane, a helicopter, or a balloon) the shot is called a *tracking shot*.

**double-system recording** The standard technique of recording film sound on a medium separate from the picture; this technique allows both for maximum quality control of the medium and for the many aspects of manipulating sound during **postproduction editing, mixing, and synchronization**.

**down shot** See **high-angle shot**.

**dubbing** See **rerecording**.

**duration** The time a movie takes to unfold onscreen. For any movie, we can identify three specific kinds of duration: **story duration, plot duration, and screen duration**. Duration has two related components: **real time and cinematic time**.

**Dutch-angle shot** Also known as *Dutch shot* or *oblique-angle shot*. A **shot** in which the camera is tilted from its normal horizontal and vertical positions so that it is no longer straight, giving the viewer the impression that the world in the **frame** is out of balance.

**Dutch shot** See **Dutch-angle shot**.

## E

**ECU** See **extreme close-up**.

**editing** The process by which the editor combines and coordinates individual **shots** into a cinematic whole; the basic creative force of cinema.

**ellipsis** In filmmaking, generally an omission of time—the time that separates one **shot** from another—to create dramatic or comedic impact.

**ELS** See **extreme long shot**.

**ensemble acting** An approach to acting that emphasizes the interaction of actors, not the individual actor. In ensemble acting, a group of actors work together continuously in a single **shot**. Typically experienced in the theater, ensemble acting is used less in the movies because it requires the provision of rehearsal time that is usually denied to screen actors.

**establishing shot** See **master shot** and **extreme long shot**.

**executive producer** Person responsible for supervising one or more **producers**, who in turn are responsible for individual movies.

**experimental film** Also known as *avant-garde film*, a term implying a position in the vanguard, out in front of traditional films. Experimental films are usually about unfamiliar, unorthodox, or obscure subject matter and are ordinarily made by independent (even underground) filmmakers, not studios, often with innovative techniques that call attention to, question, and even challenge their own artifice.

**explicit meaning** Everything that a movie presents on its surface. Compare **implicit meaning**.

**exposition** The images, action, and **dialogue** necessary to give the audience the background of the **characters** and the nature of their situation, laying the foundation for the rest of the **narrative**.

**exposure index** See **film stock speed**.

**external sound** A form of **diegetic sound** that comes from a place within the world of the **story**, which we and the **characters** in the **scene** hear but do not see. Compare **internal sound**.

**extra** An actor who, usually, appears in a non-speaking or crowd role and receives no screen credit.

**extreme close-up (ECU, XCU)** A very close shot of a particular detail, such as a person's eye, a ring on a finger, or a watch face.

**extreme long shot (ELS, XLS)** A shot that is typically photographed far enough away from the subject that the subject is too small to be recognized, except through the context we see, which usually includes a wide view of the location, as well as general background information. When it is used to provide such informative context, the extreme long shot is also referred to as an *establishing shot*.

**eye-level shot** A shot that is made from the observer's eye level and usually implies that the observer's attitude is neutral toward the subject being photographed.

**eye-line match cut** A **match cut** that joins shot A (often a **point-of-view** shot of a **character**

looking offscreen in one direction) and shot B (the person or object that the character is seeing). Compare **graphic match cut** and **match-on-action cut**.

## F

**factual film** A **documentary film** that, usually, presents people, places, or processes in a straightforward way meant to entertain and instruct without unduly influencing audiences. Compare **instructional film**, **persuasive film**, and **propaganda film**.

**fade-in/fade-out** Transitional devices in which a **shot** fades in from a black field on black-and-white film or from a color field on color film, or fades out to a black field (or a color field). Compare **dissolve**.

**falling action** The events that follow the **climax** and bring the **narrative** to conclusion (**denouement**). Compare **rising action**.

**familiar image** Any image that a **director** periodically repeats in a movie (with or without variations) to help stabilize the **narrative**.

**fast motion** **Photography** that accelerates action by photographing it at a filming rate less than the normal 24 **frames** per second so that, in **cinematic time**, it takes place at a more rapid rate than the real action took place before the camera. Compare **slow motion**.

**featured role** See **major role**.

**feed spool** The storage area for unexposed film in the movie camera.

**fiction film** See **narrative film**.

**fidelity** The faithfulness or unfaithfulness of a sound to its source.

**figure** Any significant thing that moves on the screen—person, animal, object.

**fill light** Lighting, positioned at the opposite side of the camera from the **key light**, that can fill in the shadows created by the brighter key light. Fill light may also come from a **reflector board**.

**film criticism** Evaluating a film's artistic merit and appeal to the public. Film criticism takes two basic forms: reviews written for a general audience and appearing in the popular media,

- and essays published in academic journals for a scholarly audience. Compare **film theory**.
- film speed** See **film stock speed**.
- film stock** Celluloid used to record movies. There are two types: one for black-and-white films, the other for color. Each type is manufactured in several standard **formats**.
- film-stock length** The number of feet (or meters) of **film stock** or the number of reels being used in a particular film.
- film-stock speed** Also known as *film speed* or *exposure index*. The rate at which film must move through the camera to correctly capture an image; very fast film requires little light to capture and fix the image; very slow film requires a lot of light.
- film theory** Evaluating movies from a particular intellectual or ideological perspective. Compare **film criticism**.
- first AC** See **assistant cameraperson**.
- first-person narration** Narration by an actual character in the movie. Compare **voice-over narration**.
- flashback** A device for presenting or reawakening the memory of the camera, a **character**, the audience—or all three—in which the action **cuts** from the **narrative** present to a past event, which may or may not have already appeared in the movie either directly or through inference. Compare **flashforward**.
- flash card** A fast, portable, shock-resistant memory card, housed in a small plastic or metal case, that is used as a storage medium in such battery-powered devices as **digital** cameras, mobile phones, and portable digital assistants.
- flash-forward** A device for presenting the anticipation of the camera, a **character**, the audience—or all three—in which the action **cuts** from the **narrative** present to a future time, one in which, for example, the **omniscient** camera reveals directly or a character imagines, from his or her **point of view**, what is going to happen. Compare **flashback**.
- flat character** A **character** that is one-dimensional and easily remembered because his or her motivations and actions are predictable. Flat characters may be **major**, **minor**, or **marginal** characters. Compare **round character**.
- floodlight** A lamp that produces soft (diffuse) light. Compare **focusable spotlight**.
- focal length** The distance from the optical center of a **lens** to the focal point (the **film plane** that the cameraperson wants to keep in focus) when the lens is focused at infinity.
- focusable spotlight** A lamp that produces hard, mirrorlike light. Compare **floodlight**.
- Foley sound** A sound belonging to a special category of **sound effects**, invented in the 1930s by Jack Foley, a sound technician at Universal Studios. Technicians known as Foley artists create these sounds in specially equipped studios, where they use a variety of **props** and other equipment to simulate sounds such as footsteps in the mud, jingling car keys, or cutlery hitting a plate.
- form** The means by which a subject is expressed. The form for poetry is words; for drama, it is speech and action; for movies, it is pictures and sound; and so on. Compare **content**.
- formal analysis** Film analysis that examines how a **scene** or **sequence** uses formal elements to convey **story**, mood, and meaning.
- format** Also called *gauge*. The dimensions of a **film stock** and its perforations, and the size and shape of the image **frame** as seen on the screen. Formats extend from Super 8mm through 70mm (and beyond into such specialized formats as IMAX), but they are generally limited to three standard gauges: Super 8mm, 16mm, and 35mm.
- frame** A still photograph that, recorded in rapid succession with other still photographs, creates a motion picture.
- framing** The process by which the cinematographer determines what will appear within the borders of the moving image (the **frame**) during a **shot**.
- freeze-frame** Also known as *stop-frame* or *hold-frame*. A still image within a movie, created by repetitive printing in the laboratory of the same **frame** so that it can be seen without movement for whatever length of time the filmmaker desires.

**frequency** The speed with which a sound is produced (the number of sound waves produced per second). The speed of sound remains fairly constant when it passes through air, but it varies in different media and in the same medium at different temperatures. Compare **pitch**.

**full-body shot** See **long shot**.

**fusil photographique** A form of the chronophotographic gun (see **revolver photographique**)—a single, portable camera capable of taking twelve continuous images.

**FX** See **special effects**.

## G

**gaffer** The chief electrician on a movie production set.

**gate** See **aperture**.

**gauge** See **format**.

**generic transformation** The process by which a particular **genre** is adapted to meet the expectations of a changing society.

**genre** The categorization of **narrative films** by **form**, **content**, or both. Examples of genres are musical, comedy, biography, Western, and so on.

**graphic match cut** A **match cut** in which the similarity between **shots** A and B is in the shape and form of what we see. The shape, color, or texture of objects matches across the edit, providing continuity. Compare **eye-line match cut** and **match-on-action cut**.

**grip** All-around handyperson on a movie production set, most often working with the camera crews and electrical crews.

**group point of view** A **point of view** captured by a **shot** that shows what a group of **characters** would see, but at the group's level, not from the much higher **omniscient point of view**. Compare **single character's point of view**.

## H

**harmonic content** The wavelengths that make up a sound. Compare **quality**.

**high-angle shot** Also known as *high shot* or *down shot*. A **shot** that is made with the camera above the action and that typically implies the

observer's sense of superiority to the subject being photographed. Compare **low-angle shot**.

**high-key lighting** Lighting that produces an image with very little contrast between darks and lights. Its even, flat illumination expresses virtually no opinions about the subject being photographed. Compare **low-key lighting**.

**high shot** See **high-angle shot**.

**hold-frame** See **freeze-frame**.

**hub** A major event in a **plot**; a branching point in the plot structure that forces a **character** to choose between or among alternate paths. Compare **satellite**.

## I

**ideological meaning** Meaning expressed by a film that reflects beliefs on the part of filmmakers, **characters**, or the time and place of the movie's **setting**. Ideological meaning is the product of social, political, economic, religious, philosophical, psychological, and sexual forces that shape the filmmakers' perspectives.

**imaginary line** See **180-degree system**.

**implicit meaning** An association, connection, or inference that a viewer makes on the basis of the given (explicit) **story** and **form** of a film. Lying below the surface of **explicit meaning**, implicit meaning is closest to our everyday sense of the word *meaning*.

**improvisation** 1. Actors' extemporization—that is, delivering lines based only loosely on the written script or without the preparation that comes with studying a script before rehearsing it. 2. "Playing through" a moment—that is, making up lines to keep **scenes** going when actors forget their written lines, stumble on lines, or have some other mishap.

**in-camera effect** A **special effect** that is created in the **production camera** (the regular camera used for **shooting** the rest of the film) on the original **negative**. Examples of in-camera effects include **montage** and **split screen**. Compare **laboratory effect** and CGI.

**inciting moment** The event or situation during the **exposition** stage of the **narrative** that sets the rest of the narrative in motion.

**instructional film** A documentary film that seeks to educate viewers about common interests, rather than persuading them with particular ideas. Compare **factual film**, **persuasive film**, and **propaganda film**.

**intercutting** Editing of two or more actions taking place at the same time that creates the effect of a single **scene** rather than of two distinct actions. Compare **crosscutting** and **parallel editing**.

**interior monologue** One variation on the mental, subjective **point of view** of an individual **character** that allows us to see a character and hear that character's thoughts (in his or her own voice, even though the character's lips don't move).

**internal sound** A form of **diegetic sound** in which we hear the thoughts of a **character** we see onscreen and assume that other characters cannot hear them. Compare **external sound**.

**iris** 1. A circular cutout made with a **mask** that creates a **frame** within a frame. 2. An adjustable diaphragm that limits the amount of light passing through the **lens** of a camera.

**iris-in/iris-out** See **iris shot**.

**iris shot** Optical **wipe** effect in which the wipe line is a circle; named after the **iris** of a camera. The *iris-in* begins with a small circle, which expands to a partial or full image; the *iris-out* begins with a large circle, which contracts to a smaller circle or total blackness.

## J

**jump cut** The removal of a portion of a film, resulting in an instantaneous advance in the action—a sudden, perhaps illogical, often disorienting **ellipsis** between two **shots**.

## K

**key light** Also known as *main light* or *source light*. The brightest light falling on a subject.

**kinesis** The aspect of **composition** that takes into account everything that moves on the screen.

**Kinetograph** The first motion-picture camera.

**Kinetoscope** A peephole viewer, an early motion-picture device.

## L

**laboratory effect** A special effect that is created in the laboratory through **processing** and printing. Compare **in-camera effect** and **CGI**.

**lap dissolve** See **dissolve**.

**leading role** See **major role**.

**lens** The piece of transparent material in a camera that focuses the image on the film being exposed. The four major types of lenses are the **short-focal-length lens**, the **middle-focal-length lens**, the **long-focal-length lens**, and the **zoom lens**.

**lighting ratio** The relationship and balance between illumination and shadow—the balance between **key light** and **fill light**.

**line of action** See **180-degree system**.

**line producer** The person, usually involved from **preproduction** through **postproduction**, who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the **production** operation.

**long-focal-length lens** Also known as *telephoto lens*. A **lens** that flattens the space and depth of an image and thus distorts perspectival relations. Compare **middle-focal-length lens**, **short-focal-length lens**, and **zoom lens**.

**long shot (LS)** Also known as *full-body shot*. A **shot** that shows the full human body, usually filling the **frame**, and some of its surroundings.

**long take** Also known as *sequence shot*. A **shot** that can last anywhere from one minute to ten minutes. (Between 1930 and 1960, the average length of a shot was 8–11 seconds; today it's 6–7 seconds, signifying that directors are telling their stories with a tighter pace.)

**looping** See **rerecording**.

**loudness** The volume or intensity of a sound, which is defined by its **amplitude**. Loudness is described as either *loud* or *soft*.

**low-angle shot** Also known as *low shot*. A **shot** that is made with the camera below the action and that typically places the observer in a position of inferiority. Compare **high-angle shot**.

**low-key lighting** Lighting that creates strong contrasts; sharp, dark shadows; and an overall gloomy atmosphere. Its contrasts between light and dark often imply ethical judgments. Compare **high-key lighting**.

**low shot** See **low-angle shot**.

**LS** See **long shot**.

## M

**magic lantern** An early movie projector.

**main light**—See **key light**.

**main role** See **major role**.

**major character** One of the main **characters** in a movie. Major characters make the most things happen or have the most things happen to them. Compare **minor character** and **marginal character**.

**major role** Also known as *main role*, *featured role*, or *leading role*. A role that is a principal agent in helping move the **plot** forward. Whether **movie stars** or newcomers, actors playing major roles appear in many **scenes** and—ordinarily, but not always—receive screen credit preceding the title. Compare **minor role**.

**marginal character** A **minor character** that lacks both definition and screen time.

**mask** An opaque sheet of metal, paper, or plastic (with, for example, a circular cutout, known as an **iris**) that is placed in front of the camera and admits light through that circle to a specific area of the **frame**—to create a frame within a frame.

**master shot** Also known as *establishing shot* or *cover shot*. A **shot** that ordinarily serves as a foundation for (and usually begins) a **sequence** by showing the location of ensuing action. Although usually a **long shot** or **extreme long shot**, a master shot may also be a **medium shot** or **close-up** that includes a sign or other cue to identify the location. Master shots are also called *cover shots* because the editor can repeat them later in the film to remind the audience of the location, thus “covering” the **director** by avoiding the need to **reshoot**.

**match cut** A **cut** that preserves continuity between two **shots**. Several kinds of match cuts

exist, including the **eye-line match cut**, the **graphic match cut**, and the **match-on-action cut**.

**match-on-action cut** A **match cut** in which the action continues seamlessly from one **shot** to the next or from one camera angle to the next. Compare **eye-line match cut** and **graphic match cut**.

**MCU** See **medium close-up**.

**mechanical effect** A **special effect** created by an object or event mechanically on the **set** and in front of the camera.

**mediation** An agent, structure, or other formal element, whether human or technological, that transfers something, such as information in the case of movies, from one place to another.

**medium close-up (MCU)** A **shot** that shows a **character** from the middle of the chest to the top of the head. A medium close-up provides a view of the face that catches minor changes in expression, as well as some detail about the character’s posture.

**medium long shot (MLS)** Also known as *plan américain* or American shot. A **shot** that shows a **character** from the knees up and includes most of a person’s body.

**medium shot (MS)** A **shot** showing the human body, usually from the waist up.

**Method acting** Also known as simply *the Method*. A naturalistic acting style, loosely adapted from the ideas of Russian **director** Konstantin Stanislavsky by American directors Elia Kazan and Lee Strasberg, that encourages actors to speak, move, and gesture not in a traditional stage manner, but in the same way they would in their own lives. An ideal technique for representing convincing human behavior, Method acting is used more frequently on the stage than on the screen.

**middle-focal-length lens** Also known as *normal lens*. A **lens** that does not distort perspectival relations. Compare **long-focal-length lens**, **short-focal-length lens**, and **zoom lens**.

**minor character** A supporting **character** in a movie. Minor characters have fewer traits than **major characters**, so we know less about them. They may also be so lacking in definition and

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screen time that we can consider them **marginal characters**.

**minor role** Also known as *supporting role*. A role that helps move the **plot** forward (and thus may be as important as a **major role**), but that is played by an actor who does not appear in as many **scenes** as the featured players do.

**mise-en-scène** Also known as *staging*. The overall look and feel of a movie—the sum of everything the audience sees, hears, and experiences while viewing it.

**mixing** The process of combining different **sound tracks** onto one composite sound track that is synchronous with the picture.

**MLS** See **medium long shot**.

**montage** 1. In France, the word for **editing**, from the verb *monter*, “to assemble or put together.” 2. In the former Soviet Union in the 1920s, the various forms of editing that expressed ideas developed by theorists and filmmakers such as Sergei Eisenstein. 3. In Hollywood, beginning in the 1930s, a **sequence** of **shots**, often with superimpositions and optical effects, showing a condensed series of events.

**motion picture film** See **celluloid roll film**.

**motif** A recurring visual, sound, or **narrative** element that imparts meaning or significance.

**movie star** A phenomenon, generally associated with Hollywood, comprising the actor and the **characters** played by that actor, an image created by the studio to coincide with the kind of roles associated with the actor, and a reflection of the social and cultural history of the period in which that image was created.

**moving frame** The result of the dynamic functions of the **frame** around a motion-picture image, which can contain moving action but can also move and thus change its viewpoint.

**MS** See **medium shot**.

## N

**narration** The commentary spoken by either off-screen or onscreen voices, frequently used in **narrative films**, where it may emanate from an **omniscient** voice (and thus not one of the

**characters**) or from a character in the movie.

There are two main types of narration: **first-person narration** and **voice-over narration**.

**narrative** A cinematic structure in which **content** is selected and arranged in a cause-and-effect **sequence** of events occurring over time.

**narrative film** Also known as *fiction film*. A movie that tells a **story**—with **characters**, places, and events—that is conceived in the mind of the film’s creator. Stories in narrative films may be wholly imaginary or based on true occurrences, and they may be realistic, unrealistic, or both. Compare **nonfiction film**.

**narrator** A voice that helps tell the **story**. The narrator may be either a **character** in the movie or a person who is not a character.

**negative** A negative **photographic** image on transparent material that makes possible the reproduction of the image.

**nondiegetic element** Something that we see and hear on the screen that comes from outside the world of the **story** (including background music, titles and credits, and **voice-over narration**). Compare **diegetic element**.

**nondiegetic sound** Sound that originates from a source outside a film’s world. Compare **diegetic sound**.

**nonsimultaneous sound** Sound that has previously been established in the movie and occurs when a **character** has a mental **flashback** to an earlier voice that recalls a conversation or a sound that identifies a place. Compare **simultaneous sound**.

**normal lens** See **middle-focal-length lens**.

## O

**oblique-angle shot** See **Dutch-angle shot**.

**offscreen sound** A form of sound, either **diegetic** or **nondiegetic**, that derives from a source we do not see. When diegetic, it consists of **sound effects**, music, or vocals that emanate from the world of the **story**. When nondiegetic, it takes the form of a musical score or **narration** by someone who is not a **character** in the story. Compare **onscreen sound**.

**offscreen space** Cinematic space that exists outside the **frame**. Compare **onscreen space**.

**omniscient** Providing a third-person view of all aspects of a movie's action or **characters**. Compare **restricted**.

**omniscient point of view** The most basic and most common **point of view**. *Omniscient* means that the camera has complete or unlimited perception of what the cinematographer *chooses* for it to see and hear; this point of view shows what that camera sees, typically from a high angle. Compare **single character's point of view** and **group point of view**.

**on location** Shooting in an actual interior or exterior location away from the studio. Compare **set**.

**180-degree rule** See **180-degree system**.

**180-degree system** Also known as *axis of action*, *imaginary line*, *line of action*, or *180-degree rule*. The fundamental means by which filmmakers maintain consistent **screen direction**, orienting the viewer and ensuring a sense of the cinematic space in which the action occurs. The system assumes three things: (a) the action within a **scene** will always advance along a straight line, either from left to right or from right to left of the **frame**; (b) the camera will remain consistently on one side of that action; and (c) everyone on the **production set** will understand and adhere to this system.

**onscreen sound** A form of **diegetic sound** that emanates from a source that we both see and hear. Onscreen sound may be **internal sound** or **external sound**. Compare **offscreen sound**.

**onscreen space** Cinematic space that exists inside the **frame**. Compare **offscreen space**.

**open frame** A **frame** around a motion-picture image that, theoretically, **characters** and objects can enter and leave. Compare **closed frame**.

**option contract** During the classical Hollywood era, an actor's standard seven-year contract, reviewed every six months: if the actor had made progress in being assigned roles and demonstrating box-office appeal, the studio picked up the option to employ that actor for the next six months and gave the actor a raise; if not,

the studio dropped the option and the actor was out of a job.

**order** The arrangement of **plot** events into a logical sequence or hierarchy. Across an entire **narrative** or in a brief section of it, any film can use one or more methods to arrange its plot: chronological order, cause-and-effect order, logical order, and so on.

**outtake** Material that is not used in either the rough cut or the final cut, but is cataloged and saved.

**overlap editing** An **editing** technique that expands viewing time and adds emphasis to an action or moment by repeating it several times in rapid succession.

**overlapping sound** Sound that carries over from one **shot** to the next before the sound of the second shot begins.

## P

**pan shot** The horizontal movement of a camera mounted on the gyroscopic head of a stationary tripod; like the **tilt shot**, the pan shot is a simple movement with dynamic possibilities for creating meaning.

**parallel editing** Also called *crosscutting* and *intercutting*, although the three terms have slightly different meanings. The intercutting of two or more lines of action that occur simultaneously, a very familiar convention in chase or rescue **sequences**. See also **crosscutting** and **intercutting**. Compare **split screen**.

**persistence of vision** The process by which the human brain retains an image for a fraction of a second longer than the eye records it.

**persuasive film** A **documentary film** concerned with presenting a particular perspective on social issues, or with corporate and governmental injustice. Compare **factual film**, **instructional film**, and **propaganda film**.

**phi phenomenon** The illusion of movement created by events that succeed each other rapidly, as when two adjacent lights flash on and off alternately and we seem to see a single light shifting back and forth. See also **apparent motion**.

**photography** Literally, "writing with light"; technically, the recording of static images through a chemical interaction caused by light rays striking a sensitized surface.

**pitch** The level of a sound, which is defined by its **frequency**. Pitch is described as either *high* or *low*.

**pixels** Short for "picture elements," these are the small dots that make up the image on a video screen. The dots (denoted by the binary numbers 0 and 1) are meaningless in themselves; but when they are arranged in order, like the pieces in a jigsaw puzzle, they form a picture.

**plan américain** See **medium long shot**.

**plane** Any of three theoretical areas—foreground, middle ground, and background—within the **frame**. See also **rule of thirds**.

**plot** A structure for presenting everything that we see and hear in a film, with an emphasis on causality, consisting of two factors: (a) the arrangement of the diegetic events in a certain **order** or structure and (b) added nondiegetic material. See **diegesis** and **nondiegetic elements**. Compare **narrative** and **story**.

**plot duration** The elapsed time of the events within a **story** that a film chooses to tell. Compare **screen duration** and **story duration**.

**point of view (POV)** The position from which a film presents the actions of the **story**; not only the relation of the **narrator(s)** to the story but also the camera's act of seeing and hearing. The two fundamental types of cinematic point of view are **omniscient** and **restricted**.

**point-of-view editing** The joining together of a **point-of-view shot** with a **match cut** (specifically, a **match-on-action cut**) to show, in the first shot, a **character** looking and, in the second, what that character is looking at.

**postproduction** The third stage of the production process, consisting of **editing**, preparing the final print, and bringing the film to the public (marketing and distribution). Postproduction is preceded by **preproduction** and **production**.

**POV** See **point of view**.

**preproduction** The initial, planning-and-preparation stage of the production process.

Preproduction is followed by **production** and **postproduction**.

**prime lens** A lens that has a fixed **focal length**. The **short-focal-length**, **middle-focal-length**, and **long-focal-length lenses** are all prime lenses; the **zoom lens** is in its own category.

**processing** The second stage of creating motion pictures in which a laboratory technician washes exposed film (which contains a **negative image**) with processing chemicals. Processing is preceded by **shooting** and followed by **projecting**.

**process shot** Live **shooting** against a background that is front- or rear-projected on a translucent screen.

**producer** The person who guides the entire process of making the movie from its initial planning to its release and is chiefly responsible for the organizational and financial aspects of the **production**, from arranging the financing to deciding how the money is spent.

**production** The second stage of the production process, the actual **shooting**. Production is preceded by **preproduction** and followed by **postproduction**.

**production designer** A person who works closely with the **director**, **art director**, and director of **photography**, in visualizing the movie that will appear on the screen. The production designer is both an artist and an executive, responsible for the overall **design** concept, the *look* of the movie—as well as individual **sets**, **locations**, **furnishings**, **props**, and **costumes**—and for supervising the heads of the many departments (art, costume design and construction, **hairstyling**, **makeup**, **wardrobe**, **location**, etc.) that create that look.

**production value** The amount of human and physical resources devoted to the image, including the style of its lighting. Production value helps determine the overall style of a film.

**projecting** The third stage of creating motion pictures, in which edited film is run through a projector, which shoots through the film a beam of light intense enough to project a large image on the movie-theater screen. Projecting is preceded by **shooting** and **processing**.

**propaganda film** A documentary film that systematically disseminates deceptive or distorted information. Compare **factual film**, **instructional film**, and **persuasive film**.

**properties** Also known as *props*. Objects such as paintings, vases, flowers, silver tea sets, guns, or fishing rods that help us understand the **characters** by showing us their preferences in such things.

**props** See **properties**.

**protagonist** The major character who serves as the "hero" and who "wins" the conflict. Compare **antagonist**.

**pull-down claw** Within the movie camera and projector, the mechanism that controls the intermittent cycle of **shooting** and **projecting** individual **frames** and advances the film frame by frame.

**pull focus** See **rack focus**.

## Q

**quality** Also known as *timbre*, *texture*, or *color*. The complexity of a sound, which is defined by its **harmonic content**. Described as *simple* or *complex*, quality is the characteristic that distinguishes a sound from others of the same **pitch** and **loudness**.

## R

**rack focus** Also known as *select focus*, *shift focus*, or *pull focus*. A change of the point of focus from one subject to another within the same **shot**. Rack focus guides our attention to a new clearly focused point of interest while blurring the previous subject in the shot.

**raw film stock** See **celluloid roll film**.

**realism** An interest in or concern for the actual or real; a tendency to view or represent things as they really are. Compare **antirealism**.

**real time** The actual time during which something takes place. In real time, **screen duration** and **plot duration** are exactly the same. Many **directors** use real time within films to create uninterrupted "reality" on the screen, but they rarely use it for entire films. Compare **cinematic**

**time**, **stretch relationship**, and **summary relationship**.

**reflector board** A piece of lighting equipment, but not really a lighting instrument, because it does not rely on bulbs to produce illumination. Essentially, a reflector board is a double-sided board that pivots in a *U*-shaped holder. One side is a hard, smooth surface that reflects hard light; the other is a soft, textured surface that reflects softer **fill light**.

**reframing** A movement of the camera that adjusts or alters the **composition** or **point of view** of a **shot**.

**repetition** The number of times that a **story** element recurs in a **plot**. Repetition signals that a particular event has noteworthy meaning or significance.

**rerecording** Also known as *looping* or *dubbing*. The replacing of **dialogue**, which can be done manually (that is, with the actors watching the footage, synchronizing their lips with it, and rereading the lines) or, more likely today, through computerized **automatic dialogue replacement** (ADR). (*Dubbing* also refers to the process of replacing dialogue in a foreign language with English, or the reverse, throughout a film.)

**reshoot** To make additional **takes** of a **shot** in order to meet the **director's** standards or as supplemental material for **production** photography.

**resolution** The capacity of the camera **lens**, **film stock**, and **processing** to provide fine detail in an image.

**restricted** Providing a view from the perspective of a single **character**. For example, **restricted narration** reveals information to the audience only as a specific character learns of it. Compare **omniscient**.

**reverse-angle shot** A **shot** in which the angle of **shooting** is opposite to that of the preceding shot.

**revolver photographique** Also known as *chronophotographic gun*. A cylinder-shaped camera that creates exposures automatically, at short intervals, on different segments of a revolving plate.

**rising action** The development of the action of the **narrative** toward a **climax**. Compare **falling action**.

**rough-draft screenplay** Also known as *scenario*. The next step after a **treatment**, the rough-draft screenplay results from discussions, development, and transformation of an outline in sessions known as **story conferences**.

**round character** A **character** that is three-dimensional, unpredictable, complex, and capable of surprising us in a convincing way. Round characters may be **major** or **minor** characters. Compare **flat character**.

**rule of thirds** A principle of **composition** that enables filmmakers to maximize the potential of the image, balance its elements, and create the illusion of depth. A grid pattern, when superimposed on the image, divides the image into horizontal thirds representing the foreground, middle ground, and background **planes** and into vertical thirds that break up those planes into additional elements.

**rushes** See **dailies**.

## S

**satellite** A minor **plot** event in the **diegesis**, or world, of the **narrative** but detachable from it (although removing a satellite may affect the overall texture of the narrative). Compare **hub**.

**scale** The size and placement of a particular object or a part of a **scene** in relation to the rest—a relationship determined by the type of **shot** used and the placement of the camera.

**scenario** See **rough-draft screenplay**.

**scene**—A complete unit of **plot** action incorporating one or more **shots**; the **setting** of that action.

**scope** The overall range of a **story**.

**screen direction** The direction of a **figure's** or object's movement on the screen.

**screen duration** A film's running time. Compare **plot duration** and **story duration**.

**screen test** A filming undertaken by an actor to audition for a particular role.

**script supervisor** The member of the crew who is responsible for ensuring continuity throughout the filming of a movie. Although script

supervisors once had to maintain detailed logs to accomplish this task, today they generally rely on the **video assist camera** for this purpose.

**second AC** See **assistant cameraperson**.

**select focus** See **rack focus**.

**sequence** A series of edited **shots** characterized by inherent unity of **theme** and **purpose**.

**sequence shot** See **long take**.

**series photography** The use of a series of still photographs to record the phases of an action, although the actions within the images do not move.

**set** Not reality, but a fragment of reality created as the **setting** for a particular **shot** in a movie. Sets must be constructed both to look authentic and to photograph well. Compare **on location**.

**setting** The time and space in which a **story** takes place.

**setup** One camera position and everything associated with it. Whereas the **shot** is the basic building block of the film, the setup is the basic component of the film's **production**.

**shift focus** See **rack focus**.

**shooting** The first stage of creating motion pictures, in which images are recorded on previously unexposed film as it moves through the camera. Shooting is followed by **processing** and **projecting**.

**shooting angle** The level and height of the camera in relation to the subject being photographed. The five basic camera angles produce **eye-level shots**, **high-angle shots**, **low-angle shots**, **Dutch-angle shots**, and **aerial-view shots**.

**shooting script** A guide and reference point for all members of the **production** unit, in which the details of each **shot** are listed and can thus be followed during filming.

**short-focal-length lens** Also known as *wide-angle lens*. A **lens** that creates the illusion of depth within a **frame**, albeit with some distortion at the edges of the frame. Compare **long-focal-length lens**, **middle-focal-length lens**, and **zoom lens**.

**shot** One *uninterrupted* run of the camera. A shot can be as short or as long as the **director** wants, but it cannot exceed the length of the **film stock** in the camera. Compare **setup**.

**shot/reverse shot** One of the most prevalent and familiar of all **editing** patterns, consisting of **parallel editing** (**crosscutting**) between **shots** of different **characters**, usually in a conversation or confrontation. When used in **continuity editing**, the shots are typically **framed** over each character's shoulder to preserve **screen direction**.

**shutter** A camera device that shields the film from light at the **aperture** during the film-movement portion of the intermittent cycle of **shooting**.

**simultaneous sound** Sound that is **diegetic** and occurs onscreen. Compare **nonsimultaneous sound**.

**single character's point of view** A point of **view** that is captured by a **shot** made with the camera close to the line of sight of one **character** (or animal or surveillance camera), showing what that person would be seeing of the action. Compare **omniscient point of view** and **group point of view**.

**slate** The board or other device that is used to identify each **scene** during **shooting**.

**slow motion** **Photography** that decelerates action by photographing it at a filming rate greater than the normal 24 **frames** per second so that, in **cinematic time**, it takes place at a slower rate than the real action took place before the camera. Compare **fast motion**.

**sound crew** The group that generates and controls a movie's sound physically, manipulating its properties to produce the effects that the **director** desires.

**sound design** A state-of-the-art concept, pioneered by director Francis Ford Coppola and film editor Walter Murch, combining the crafts of **editing** and **mixing** and, like them, involving both theoretical and practical issues. In essence, sound design represents advocacy for movie sound (to counter some people's tendency to favor the movie image).

**sound effect** A sound artificially created for the **sound track** that has a definite function in telling the **story**.

**soundstage** A windowless, soundproofed, professional **shooting** environment that is usually

several stories high and can cover an acre or more of floor space.

**sound track** A separate recording tape occupied by one specific type of sound recorded for a movie (one track for vocals, one for **sound effects**, one for music, etc.).

**source light** See **key light**.

**special effects (SPFX, FX)** Technology for creating images that would be too dangerous, too expensive, or, in some cases, simply impossible to achieve with traditional cinematographic materials. The goal of special-effects **cinematography** is generally to create **verisimilitude** within the imaginative world of even the most fanciful movie.

**speed** See **film-stock speed**.

**SPFX** See **special effects**.

**splicing** See **cutting**.

**split screen** A method, created either in the camera or during the **editing** process, of telling two **stories** at the same time by dividing the screen into different parts. Unlike **parallel editing**, which **cuts** back and forth between **shots** for contrast, the split screen can tell multiple stories within the same **frame**.

**sprocketed rollers** Devices that control the speed of unexposed film as it moves through the camera, printer, or projector.

**staging** See **mise-en-scène**.

**stand-in** An actor who looks reasonably like a particular **movie star** (or at least an actor playing a **major role**) in height, weight, coloring, and so on, and who substitutes for that actor during the tedious process of preparing **setups** or taking light readings.

**Stanislavsky system** A system of acting, developed by Russian theater **director** Konstantin Stanislavsky in the late nineteenth century, that encourages students to strive for **realism**, both social and psychological, and to bring their past experiences and emotions to their roles. This system influenced the development of **Method acting** in the United States.

**Steadicam** A camera suspended from an articulated arm that is attached to a vest strapped to the cameraperson's body, permitting the operator to remain steady during "handheld" shots.

- The Steadicam removes jumpiness and is now often used for smooth, fast, and intimate camera movement.
- stock** See **film stock**.
- stop-frame** See **freeze-frame**.
- stop-motion cinematography** A technique that allows the **camera operator** to stop and start the camera in order to facilitate changing the subject while the camera is not **shooting**.
- story** In a movie, all the events we see or hear on the screen, and all the events that are implicit or that we infer to have happened but that are not explicitly presented. Compare **diegesis**, **narrative**, and **plot**.
- storyboard** A scene-by-scene (sometimes **shot-by-shot**) breakdown that combines sketches or photographs of how each shot is to look and written descriptions of the other elements that are to go with each shot, including **dialogue**, sound, and music.
- story conference** One of any number of sessions during which the **treatment** is discussed, developed, and transformed from an outline into a **rough-draft screenplay**.
- story duration** The amount of time that the implied **story** takes to occur. Compare **plot duration** and **screen duration**.
- stream of consciousness** A literary style that gained prominence in the 1920s in the hands of such writers as Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Dorothy Richardson and that attempted to capture the unedited flow of experience through the mind.
- stretch relationship** A time relationship in which **screen duration** is longer than **plot duration**. Compare **real time** and **summary relationship**.
- stuntperson** A performer who doubles for another actor in **scenes** requiring special skills or involving hazardous actions, such as crashing cars, jumping from high places, swimming, or riding (or falling off of) horses.
- subplot** A subordinate **sequence** of action in a **narrative**, usually relevant to and enriching the **plot**.
- summary relationship** A time relationship in which **screen duration** is shorter than **plot duration**. Compare **real time** and **stretch relationship**.
- supporting role** See **minor role**.
- surprise** A taking unawares that is potentially shocking. Compare **suspense**.
- suspense** The anxiety brought on by partial uncertainty: the end is certain, but the means are not. Compare **surprise**.
- swish pan** A type of transition between two or more **scenes** made by moving the camera so rapidly that it blurs the moment of transition, thus suggesting (1) that the two actions are happening simultaneously, as in Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot* (1959; editor: Arthur P. Schmidt), where a swish pan separates an amorous scene involving Tony Curtis and Marilyn Monroe from a scene of Jack Lemmon, dressed as a woman, dancing with Joe E. Brown; or (2) that several years have elapsed between the scenes that comprise the breakfast-table **sequence** of Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* (1941; editor: Robert Wise).
- synopsis** See **treatment**.
- T**
- take** An indication of the number of times a particular **shot** is taken (e.g., shot 14, take 7).
- take-up spool** A device that winds the film inside the movie camera after it has been exposed.
- telephoto lens** See **long-focal-length lens**.
- texture** As related to sound, see **quality**.
- theme** A shared, public idea, such as a metaphor, an adage, a myth, or a familiar conflict or personality type.
- ~~**three-point system**~~ Perhaps the best-known lighting convention in feature filmmaking, a system that employs three sources of light—**key light**, **fill light**, and **backlight**—each aimed from a different direction and position in relation to the subject.
- tilt shot** The vertical movement of a camera mounted on the gyroscopic head of a stationary tripod. Like the **pan shot**, the tilt shot is a simple movement with dynamic possibilities for creating meaning.
- timbre** See **quality**.

**tracking shot** See **dolly shot**.

**traveling shot** See **dolly shot**.

**treatment** Also known as *synopsis*. An outline of the action that briefly describes the essential ideas and structure for a film.

**two-shot** A shot in which two characters appear; ordinarily a **medium shot** or **medium long shot**.

**typesetting** The casting of actors because of their looks or "type" rather than for their acting talent or experience.

## V

**variable-focal-length lens** See **zoom lens**.

**verisimilitude** A convincing appearance of truth; movies are verisimilar when they convince you that the things on the screen—people, places, and so on, no matter how fantastic or **antirealistic**—are "really there."

**video assist camera** A tiny device, mounted in the viewing system of the film camera, that enables a **script supervisor** to view a **scene** on a video monitor (and thus compare its details with those of surrounding scenes, to ensure visual continuity) before the film is sent to the laboratory for **processing**.

**viewfinder** On a camera, the little window that the cameraperson looks through when taking a picture; the viewfinder's frame indicates the boundaries of the camera's **point of view**.

**voice-over narration** Narration heard concurrently and over a **scene** but not synchronized to any **character** who may be talking on the screen. It can come from many sources, including an objective **narrator** (who is not a character) bringing us up-to-date, a first-person narrator commenting on the action, or, in a **nonfiction film**, a commentator. Compare **first-person narration**.

## W

**walk-on** A role even smaller than a **cameo**, reserved for a highly recognizable actor or personality.

**wardrobe** See **costumes**.

**wide-angle lens** See **short-focal-length lens**.

**widescreen** Any aspect ratio wider than 1.33:1, the standard ratio until the early 1950s.

**wipe** A transitional device between **shots** in which shot B wipes across shot A, either vertically or horizontally, to replace it. Although (or because) the device reminds us of early eras in filmmaking, **directors** continue to use it.

## X

**XCU** See **extreme close-up**.

**XLS** See **extreme long shot**.

## Z

**zoom in** A shot in which the image is magnified by movement of the camera's lens only, without the camera itself moving. This magnification is the essential difference between the zoom in and the **dolly in**.

**zoom lens** Also known as *variable-focal-length lens*. A lens that is moved toward and away from the subject being photographed, has a continuously variable **focal length**, and helps **reframe** a shot within the **take**. A zoom lens permits the **camera operator** during shooting to shift between wide-angle and telephoto lenses without changing the focus or **aperture** settings. Compare **long-focal-length lens**, **middle-focal-length lens**, and **short-focal-length lens**. See also **prime lens**.

**zoopraxiscope** An early device for exhibiting moving pictures—a revolving disk with photographs arranged around the center.